

**April 5, 2013**

**Judiciary Committee Public Hearing Testimony**

**HB 6690 AN ACT CONCERNING COURT PROCEEDINGS AND THE PROTECTION OF ANIMALS.**

Testimony from Diana Garfield  
5 West Hill Road, Bloomfield, CT  
Board Member, Our Companions Animal Rescue  
Volunteer Foster, Siamese Cat Rescue Center

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for receiving my testimony IN SUPPORT of H.B. 6690.

Societies can be judged by how they treat the defenseless. Animals must rely on others for their welfare. This bill, if passed, will allow court-appointed advocates for animals during legal proceedings that concern the animals' welfare or custody.

Advocates for animals are desperately needed in our state. In my own law practice I became aware of an individual who strangled his dog and threw it into a river because the dog misbehaved. This is just one example of many cases in which animals have been horribly abused. Unfortunately, the outcomes of such cases rarely result in penalties that match the severity of the violent crime.

This bill would provide an advocate in court for an egregiously injured animal and also document the animal's injuries and level of suffering, which would help a court make decisions for the animal's welfare.

I thank you for considering my testimony on this important piece of legislation.